

## Message Text

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71

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 DRC-01 /112 W  
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R 091722Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9469

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: SPECULATION, RECLAMATION, AND THE NEXT  
GENERAL ELECTION

1. SUMMARY: IN A LENGTHY STATEMENT TO THE COMMONS  
YESTERDAY (APRIL 8), PRIME MINISTER WILSON DEFENDED  
THE LAND TRANSACTIONS OF HIS FORMER OFFICE MANAGER  
THAT HAVE ATTRACTED RECENT PRESS ATTENTION, AND  
CATEGORICALLY DENIED ANY PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEM.  
ALTHOUGH THERE IS AS YET NO EVIDENCE OF WRONGDOING BY  
ANYONE INVOLVED, THE AFFAIR IS PROVING POLITICALLY  
EMBARRASSING TO WILSON AND MAY STILL ERUPT INTO A MAJOR  
SCANDAL. WHATEVER ELSE, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE  
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CONTRETEMPS HAS FORECLOSED THE OPTION OF A JUNE

ELECTION. END SUMMARY

2. THE BRITISH PRESS HAS RECENTLY BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE FACT THAT ANTHONY FIELD, HAROLD WILSON'S OFFICE MANAGER FROM 1971-73, HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN LAND TRANSACTIONS SINCE 1967. FIELD HAS NOT BEEN ACCUSED OF DOING ANYTHING ILLEGAL, BUT HIS ACTIVITIES ARE PROVING AN EMBARRASSMENT TO A PARTY THAT CAMPAIGNED SO BITTERLY AGAINST PROPERTY SPECULATORS AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION.

3. SUSPICIONS, AS YET UNPROVEN, HAVE BEEN RAISED THAT FIELD MAY HAVE USED WILSON'S NAME IN CONNECTION WITH SOME OF HIS LAND TRANSACTIONS. WHEN THE STORIES FIRST SURFACED LAST WEEK, WILSON RATHER HASTILY SLAPPED LIBEL WRITS ON TWO NEWSPAPERS. SCOTLAND YARD IS INVESTIGATING A FORGED LETTER THE RECIPIENT OF WHICH SAYS HE BURNED IT BECAUSE OF THREATS TO HIS CHILDREN. IT'S ALL GRIST FOR THE TABLOIDS, ALTHOUGH THE QUALITY PRESS HAS STARTED TO PONTIFICATE ABOUT THE MORE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF THE AFFAIR.

4. WHAT MAKES THE STEW EVEN SPICIER IS THE FACT THAT ANTHONY FIELD IS THE BROTHER OF MARCIA WILLIAMS, LONG-TIME CONFIDANTE AND PERSONAL SECRETARY TO WILSON. MANY PEOPLE IN THE LABOR PARTY RESENT THE INFLUENCE SHE WIELDS BEHIND THE SCENES AND ARE HOPING THAT HER BROTHER'S ACTIVITIES WILL BRING DISCREDIT ON HER TOO AND FORCE WILSON TO SACK HER.

5. AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED OF A MAN RENOWNED FOR HIS LOYALTY TO FRIENDS, WILSON BITTERLY ATTACKED THE PRESS FOR TRYING TO IMPLICATE MRS. WILLIAMS AND STOUTLY DEFENDED FIELD'S ACTIVITIES, DRAWING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPECULATION -- WHICH IS BAD -- AND RECLAMATION -- WHICH IS GOOD.

6. COMMENT: WILSON'S LENGTHY, BUT BELATED, STATEMENT TO THE COMMONS YESTERDAY HAS SATISFIED SOME OF HIS CRITICS, BUT SEVERAL QUESTIONS, INCLUDING THE CRUCIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MATTER OF WHETHER FIELD USED WILSON'S NAME IN HIS LAND TRANSACTIONS, REMAIN TO BE SETTLED. FURTHERMORE, THE ISSUANCE OF LIBEL WRITS (MRS. WILLIAMS ALSO ISSUED SOME) GUARANTEES THAT THE AFFAIR WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PRESS ATTENTION FOR SOME TIME TO COME. IN THE LONG RUN, WILSON MAY NOT SUFFER ANY POLITICAL DAMAGE, BUT FOR THE SHORT RUN, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THIS CONTRETEMPS HAS EFFECTIVELY ROBBED HIM OF THE OPTION,

HOWEVER PROBLEMATIC IT MAY HAVE BEEN, OF CALLING  
A GENERAL ELECTION IN JUNE.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MEETING PROCEEDINGS, LOWER HOUSE, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 APR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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30 JUN 2005

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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SPECULATION, RECLAMATION, AND THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION  
**TAGS:** PINT, UK, (WILSON)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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